

# PLANNING AHEAD

*Notes for the Planning and Policy  
Community of Practice*



US Army Corps  
of Engineers

May 2013

## Planning Program Delivery

### Planning Program Investment Strategy: Bringing Planning Together

Having a strong Planning Program is important to being able to serve the nation and retain qualified planners. As such, the Planning Community of Practice is actively developing a long term Planning Implementation Strategy to focus efforts on the Planning Program development. Along with the new start FY15 Budget EC guidance, an investment plan is being developed to better define and prioritize studies throughout the Nation. Investigations funding has become relatively constant, which allows for more strategic investment in projects to fund them to completion and demonstrates our ability to deliver solutions. In addition to the Investigations Program, Planning is called upon to respond to the needs of evaluating existing infrastructure, including dam and levee safety, major rehabilitation, and other investment decisions. This issue of Planning Ahead highlights some of the ongoing activities related to the Planning Program, including some good news stories and an introduction to the Implementation Strategy.

#### SMART Planning Seminars

The SMART Planning webinar series was launched on 4 April 2013. This series is intended for the National PCoP audience, and other CoPs are invited to participate. Webinars will be held on the first and third Thursday of each month from 2-3 pm Eastern time. Webinar information will be posted on the [Planning Toolbox](#).

Upcoming webinars are:

June 6 — Concurrent Review: Lessons and Tips (**2 hours special**)

June 20 — Concurrent Review: Expectations and Read Aheads

July 4 — No PCoP Webinar

#### Successes to date:

The reclassification of studies from active to inactive in 2012-2013 has allowed us to focus on completing projects more efficiently, providing solutions to complex water resources problems for our partners and the nation. We are able to budget for full capability of projects that are 3x3x3 compliant with fewer underfunded studies, allowing for resources to align with the work to be completed. Additionally, we have:

- Developed a comprehensive portfolio management strategy.
- 35 studies have been rescoped with the potential to avoid \$75 million in study costs.
- 22 studies that are committed to 3x3x3 or have received an exception to 3x3x3.
- Begun identifying a portfolio of “next up” studies for when additional funding becomes available.

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## **New Start Strategy: CW Budget Development Transformation-FY15 Budget**

The Budget EC was released and is available on the USACE website (<http://publications.usace.army.mil/publications/eng-circulars/>). Included in EC 11-2-204 are four new initiatives by Civil Works Integration and Planning divisions within USACE to make the budget formulation and planning processes more streamlined, our investments more cost effective and to bring our budget into line with Administration overall goals and objectives. One of the new initiatives is a Investigations—New Start Strategy. Section 2 of the EC requires MSCs to identify reconnaissance studies that support the President's infrastructure plan, the Civil Works Transformation and the Civil Works Strategic Plan, and also to identify and propose studies that would further develop the problems, needs and opportunities that could be addressed by a Corps action or action by others. Guidance to supplement this information was provided to MSC Planning and Policy Chiefs on 29 April, and information was due by 28 May. The information is now undergoing a national level analysis.

Many have noted that the FY15 budget guidance stops the seamless flow of funding from Feasibility to PED phase. The guidance states that the PED phase begins when a new phase decision is made by ASA(CW) with concurrence by OMB. The new phase decision is being delayed by the requirement that the CWRB must be held by 1 Aug 2013 for the FY15 budget request to start PED to be included in the submission. This change is an unfortunate outcome of our former planning practices, which resulted in expensive and drawn-out studies. Implementation of SMART Planning and the 3x3x3 rule will demonstrate our ability to complete Feasibility studies on time, which will provide the Corps the support needed to request seamless funding in the future. We must meet our current schedule commitments in order to affect change. Planning's focus should be on completing Chief's Reports as scheduled.

## **Portfolio Review**

Each MSC was tasked with conducting a thorough review of the 50 studies currently identified as legacy (complete a Chief's Report by Dec 2014) feasibility studies. Prior to the 2nd DMR each MSC validated their Legacy studies by providing their next Milestones and CWRB schedules. Currently HQ is updating the Planning Portfolio with FY14 President's Budget and FY13 Work Plan amounts. Once we receive OMB approval of the Work Plan information the Portfolio will be released to the field for validation, better study classification and response to comments. Once the Portfolio is received back from the field HQ will hold Line Item Reviews with the MSCs to discuss the Portfolio along with their FY15 budget submission to ensure HQ is consistent in its support of studies being submitted to ASACW in August.

## **Modernizing Principles and Guidelines**

The Administration released the revision to the Principles and Guidelines (P & G), "Principles and Requirements" on March 22, 2013. In addition to the Principles & Requirements, the updated P&G include new draft Guidelines which were published in the Federal Register March 27 and were available for 60 days of public comment. The public comment period has been extended an additional 30 days. Once the Guidelines are finalized, each agency will update its procedures as needed to apply the new P, R & G to their agency-specific missions. The Manager's Report on Appropriations for FY12 has restricted the Corps from developing or implementing new rules or guidance upon issuance of the revised P & G, which continues through FY13 under the Continuing Resolution. The restriction also specifies that the Corps shall continue to use the 1983 Water Resources Principles and Guidelines during that same period.

# Planning Modernization Update

## Planner Training and Capability

- a. The Planning Advisory Board (PAB) agreed with and supported the PCoP proposed strategy for Planning Core Curriculum (PCC) Refresh and Planner Certification and supported the establishment of a Planning Training Board to provide oversight of PCC and PA Programs. FY13 efforts are focused on enabling all PDT members to receive required Planning Training by 30 Sept 2013. In order to identify those planners (Planners and PDT members) truly in need of required training, PCC grandfathering criteria were established and all PCC post tests are online on demand for qualified planners and PDT members to test out of training requirements. MSC Planning Chiefs will reassess the FY12 Training Surveys by 30 June 2013 to identify planners still in need of training. PCC1 - Introduction to the Civil Works Project Development Process (formerly CW Orientation) is being converted to an on-line on demand course (expected completion June 13.) The former PCC2 - Planning Principles and Procedures and PCC 6 - Plan Formulation have been updated and combined into a course titled Planning Essentials. Pending receipt of training survey results, MSC's will launch a rapid delivery of Planning Essentials in the 4th quarter of FY13. These courses are currently being delivered through PROSPECT and via MSC regional delivery methods. In FY14 the PCC refresh will continue to develop 3 Planning core curriculum courses, linked with planner career roadmaps and tiered certification. The Expert Planner Certification will be launched in the next month while journeyman, and apprentice planner certifications and technical expert, apprentice and journeyman certifications are under development.
- b. The SMART Planning Webinar series continues to be a success with 150 plus participants attending the twice a month webinar series. This series is intended for the National PCoP audience, and other CoPs are invited to participate. Webinars will be held on the first and third Thursdays of each month from 2-3 Eastern, advertised in advance and posted on the Planning Toolbox. The two webinars completed on 2 and 16 May were on Risk and Uncertainty. [Webinar materials](#) are available on the Planning Toolbox.

## Planning Guidance and Process

- a. Watershed SMART Planning— An initial strategy for improving the conduct of Watershed Studies was developed in late March 2013. The strategy identifies methodologies for better integrating Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and SMART Planning principles into our Watershed studies. The draft framework was presented to HQ leadership on 17 May. Watershed completion strategies are under review to determine next steps for engaging with ongoing watershed studies to incorporate SMART planning principles and identify clear path's to completion.
- b. The Planning Bulletin on SMART Planning milestones is under final review and is anticipated to be issued in June 2013.
- c. Planning and Engineering are establishing a multi-function team to update the existing guidance on 33 USC 408. A PM has been identified and is currently developing a set of milestones and team member responsibilities. The guidance will cover all mission areas, required documentation, review processes and coordination with the Regulatory Program.

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## **Operation and Organization**

- a. Planning Advisory Board (PAB) F2F Meeting (Operational & Organization) - The PAB met in DC on 30 April and 1 May 2013 to develop an initial unifying Planning vision and action plan for further discussion with all Planning Chiefs during the all hands Planning Chief meeting in Southbridge, Mass. 21-23 May 2013. The PAB also reviewed the strategy and status of Planner Training and Certification plans for FY13 and 14, and the Planning guidance update strategy. There was significant discussion on planning portfolio management and the need for more rigor and Planning/Program coordination in the review of existing information. MSC Commanders will be held accountable for information presented during the 10 May 2013 2nd quarter DMR.
- b. The USACE Planning leaders meeting was held in Southbridge, MA 21-23 May 2013. Planning Chiefs (or alternates) from most of the 38 CW districts attended, as well as Chiefs from 8 MSCs and PCX Leaders (all together approximately 60 attendees). The purpose of the meeting was to bring together PCoP leaders (this was first such meeting since a one-day meeting in 2011) to provide information on and an overview of the current state of USACE's planning portfolio, capabilities, competencies and training, transition to SMART planning, near-term challenges, and other emerging issues. The three-day meeting consisted of plenary sessions and presentations, break-out sessions to focus on specific issues/tasks, and panel discussions. The outcome of the 3-day session will be a Planning Modernization Implementation Plan with goals, objectives, outcomes and metrics based on People, Process, Program and Projects.

## **Coordination and Outreach**

- a. A draft joint communication strategy has been developed and provided to USFWS and NOAA for further discussion and finalization in June 2013. A smaller interagency working group continues to develop SMART Planning USFWS/NOAA/NEPA process charts. A rollout of SMART Planning and environmental regulations is planned with a joint webinar scheduled for the summer of 2013.

## **FAQ of the month: What is the difference between SMART Planning and 3x3x3?**

SMART Planning is risk-informed, decision-focused planning transparently performed with the full vertical USACE team, partners and stakeholders. Critical issues and uncertainties are identified, managed and resolved through careful examination of decisions throughout the 6-step planning process until there is agency agreement on the acceptable level of uncertainty in a recommendation. A SMART Planning process with milestones has been established for feasibility studies but SMART Planning principles can and should apply to all little "p" Planning.

Completion of studies in 3 years for 3 million dollars, utilizing 3 levels of vertical team involvement, with reports no more than 100 pages or 3 inches is the constraint placed on feasibility studies.

### **Unifying Planning Modernization**



## Around USACE

**National Academy of Sciences National Research Council (NAS/NRC) Standing Committee:** On 11 Apr 2013 DCG-CEO, DCW and CW staff met with the NAS/NRC Water Science Technology Board to discuss potential topics for the next USACE Standing Committee report. The NAS will be preparing a report on national standards for risk reduction in flood-prone coastal areas and flood and storm risk-reduction strategies. The second Committee report, Corps of Engineers Water Resources Infrastructure: Deterioration, Investment, or Divestment? (2012), has been published which was prepared for the CW Directorate by the NAS. The link to the report is [http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=13508](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13508).

**FY15 Budget:** The first addendum to the FY15 Budget EC have been published. It is available on the USACE website ([http://publications.usace.army.mil/publications/eng-circulars/EC\\_11-2-204/](http://publications.usace.army.mil/publications/eng-circulars/EC_11-2-204/)) Included in EC 11-2-204 is guidance to the MSCs for executing the second year of watershed-based budgeting pilots. This guidance is more prescriptive HQ guidance how to get systems-based watershed stakeholders' input in the project prioritization process.

**CW Transformation, Methods of Delivery- Inland Navigation Design Center (INDC):** The approved concept was to stand up one center in two geographic locations, led by MVD. The locations have been selected, co-located with the Engineering Divisions in Rock Island and Pittsburgh Districts. The Center director is Mr. Denny Lundberg, Rock Island District. A workload and organization plan is currently being drafted and the implementing ER with roles and responsibilities will be completed this FY.

**HQ Engineering and Construction (E&C) Desk Reference:** The great response to the publication of the first E&C Desk Reference in January has led the E&C CoP to accelerating an update of this reference, which will be published in the next few weeks. The current version of the Desk Reference (version 1.0) is available to all from the E&C Technical Excellence Network (TEN) at <https://ten.usace.army.mil/Files/6/2/9/4/Desktop%20Reference.pdf>

The Chief of Engineers **Environmental Advisory Board (EAB)** will meet for an information gathering/work session 24-26 June in Seattle WA. Continuing their focus on environmental flows, members will visit Elwha Dam, a Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) flow restoration project. The first phase of the dam removal is considered ecologically successful, but there have been several unexpected adverse effects to the local infrastructure. BOR will conduct the site visit/briefing. Goal is to complete several white papers to present at the September EAB meeting. EAB will draft a long-term work plan for the Commanding General's (CG) consideration prior to September. Per CG's request EAB will also discuss STEM program via telecom with Sue Engelhardt (CEHR-ZA). The request for the SecDef to approve appointments of replacement Board members was initiated by ASA (CW) on 14 May and sent to AASA.

### Collaboration and Public Involvement CoP Webinars

The Corps' Collaboration and Public Involvement CoP - an informal network of those interested in these topics - hosts a webinar series on topics relating to internal and external collaboration. These 60-90 minute webinars occur approximately once a month and are designed to enable information sharing, learning, networking, and coaching. To access previous webinars please visit the CoP SharePoint at <https://cops.usace.army.mil/sites/CPP/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>. To join the listserv to hear about the webinars and other information about collaboration and public involvement contact Maria Placht (Maria.T.Placht@usace.army.mil).



## PCC Tests Available

The Planning CoP recognizes that there are many fully-functional planners across USACE who may not have had the opportunity to complete all seven of the existing PCC courses. In order to assist in making efficient use of training resources, all post tests have been made available online. If you believe you are a candidate to take a test in lieu of a course, discuss with your planning chief prior to enrolling for the test. Directions for accessing the tests is available on the [ULC webpage](#).

Keep in mind:

- Each person can take each test once.
- A passing score is 80%.
- Once you answer a question and move to the next, you cannot go back and change a previous answer.

Planners and PDT members are encouraged to meet with their supervisors about the applicability to taking the test in lieu of the course and to [study in advance of the test](#).

For more information on the PCC test availability, see the [April Planning Ahead](#).

